1945

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Memorandum Regarding the College's Conception of its Function:

The philosophy which has produced Sir George Williams College can be found in embryo in the very first annual report of the Young Men's Christian Association in London, England, one hundred years ago, in which it was stated that the objectives of the new organization were "the spiritual and mental development of young men in the drapery trades". From the very first first, education was an integral part of the programme and method of the Young Men's Christian Association - not merely education, be it noted, but education for " Young men in the .... trades".

The purpose of Sir George Williams College, as set forth in its by-laws is the achievement of the purposes of the Young Men's Christian Association" through the medium of formal education and its correlated activities". These purposes of the Montreal Y.M.C.A., as set forth in its constitution, have to do with "the spiritual, mental, social and physical welfare" of young people.

It is part of the history of education that denominational and other religious bodies have constantly recognized the value of education as a means of furthering their objectives. From time immemorial they have conducted schools, colleges and universities. Indeed, at the present moment, by far the larger proportion of the institutions of higher education in Canada are under religious or denominational auspices. More recently social and political groups have accorded education the same recognition, and have established their institutions for this purpose.

The Montreal Y.M.C.A., founded in 1851, has been engaged in formal education since at least 1873, first with an "Educational Department", then for a few years in the 1920's with the "Montreal Y.M.C.A. Schools", and since 1926 as "Sir George Williams College".

How has it, during those years, translated the general and ultimate purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association into more proximate objectives? How has it decided, during that time, what courses to teach, how to teach them, and to whom? How has it determined whether or not these courses actually were contributing to the major purposes of the Young Men's Christian Association? How has it viewed its function, historically?

It seems apparent that, from the very beginning its primary concern has been for the needs of people, particularly of employed people -- "the young men in the trades". From 1873 until about 1920, its course offerings were almost entirely evening and were exclusively of two types: (1) vocational training; and (2) conventionally academic, at the elementary and high school levels, preparing definitely for the standard matriculation examinations which were pre-requisite to professional training. In making this provision it was quite consciously remedial and supplementary in nature -- remedying the early deficiencies in the formal education of young adults; and supplementing the existing public agencies of education by striving to meet the otherwise unmet needs of young people of ability.

This selection of course offerings, even in the "academic" subjects, was apparently made for a very practical and utilitarian point of view. These courses were apparently considered important for the contribution which the

acquired skill, knowledge or diploma might make to the individual's occupational advancement. They provided his "second chance", his opportunity to " pull himself up by his bootstraps". These were recognized as legitimate needs of people and valid educational objectives, and as such were accepted as contributing to the "welfare of young men".

It is hard to detect, from this distance, any evidence during these early years of an emphasis upon what these courses might do in themselves to the students as persons. Not until the early 1920's do we find evidence of a shift from the ulterior to the intrinsic in motivation, and an emphasis upon the contribution which formal education might make directly to the development of personality, character, religious, aesthetic and social attitudes. This newer emphasis did not discard the older vocational motive. Far from it, because it insisted that if education was to promote the full growth of persons it must be concerned with all of life, including vocation. It did produce, in the college. however, the following developments:

1. the growth of curricular programmes rather than unit courses

2. the inauguration of "general" courses and an emphasis upon "generalization" in curriculum.

3. arrangements for student guidance.

4. a reinforcement of the validity of formal education as a medium for the achievement of Y.M.C.A. objectives.

It is interesting to note that this shift in emphasis in the College parallelled a drift toward the so-called "Progressive" in education generally. This "Progressive" philosophy, defining education simply as the process of stimulating growth in persons, found fertile soil in the Y.M.C.A's and Y.M.C.A. Colleges on this continent.

There were thus discernible by the mid-twenties all, or most, of the strands which have guided the academic policy of the College during the past 20 years. They might be summarized as follows:

1. that the growth of persons be the primary criterion in determining academic method and evaluating effectiveness.

2. that the needs of people be the first consideration in determining course offerings.

3. that vocational competency is one of these needs, and therefore an acceptable and laudable educational aim.

4. that generalization in programme offers the greatest hope for the achievement of the spiritual, aesthetic and social values of education and the promotion of unified personal growth

5. that, from the point of view of society, each unmet educational need, each individual not given education commensurate with his ability, represents a social wastage and a challenge to action on the part of the College.

The Past Two Decades

How have these philosophic strands affected the programme and growth of each unit of the College during the past twenty years - in which, by the way, it must be remembered that the enrolment has grown from 400 to almost 4000, and the staff from 10 persons to perhaps 150?

The High School was the first unit affected by the shift in emphasis outlined above. At first its programme was of a semi-coaching nature, preparing exclusively for matriculation as a prerequisite to the professions. This type of "cramming school" was abandoned in the early '20's, and a full four-year Evening High School established on a curricular basis. The day coaching school was discontinued in 1929, and nothing substituted in its place since it was felt that there was not sufficient need at **that** time for another private day high school.

The Evening High School, however, now found itself with two motives in apparent conflict: First: the need on the part of some students, and the desire on the part of many others, for the traditional standard matriculation programme in preparation for future studies; Second: the desire to provide a high school experience which would be really educative because more truly general and more closely geared to the daily lives of the employed young people who were its students. Steps taken to resolve this dilemma included:

1. the complete generalization of the first two years, for all students.

2. the inauguration of a four-year "general" course for students not planning to give up day employment and attend day college.

3. an attempt to emphasize general values and to discourage teaching for examinations, in the two upper years of the college preparatory course.

Yet the dilemma remained troublesome, and still does. There is an internal stress in the High School upon general education of a broad and "terminal" nature, while outside the public and most other educational institutions stress high school education as preparation for higher education. Our belief that good "general" high school education would be the best possible preparation for higher education is not shared by some of the educational institutions and professional societies to which our High School graduates seek admission. Therefore many who will never seek such admission are influenced **unwisely** to select the preparatory courses. This causes a division of the High School student body between two types of curriculum, and hampers our efforts to evolve an integration of the preparatory, vocational and general concepts into a unified educational programme.

In such a situation there seem to be three choices open to us:

1. Offer only the conventional preparatory course. - This we have rejected as failing to meet the real needs of the majority of our High School student body.

2. Offer only the general and vocational programme, and ignore the

entrance requirements of universities and professional societies. - This would fail to meet the needs of the small number who should meet these requirements, whatever they may be.

3. Try to serve both groups, while in the meantime trying to influence public opinion and other educationists to admit the validity of a general high school course for admission to college.

We have quite consciously chosen the third alternative. If this is sound, should we not now:
(1) work harder at changing public opinion regarding matriculation;
(2) "bootleg" more generalization into the preparatory courses.

The story in the College proper (the Faculty of Arts, Science and Commerce) is so similar as not to require detailed repetition. Commencing in 1929, in response to insistent pressure from graduates of our own Evening High School and others, it began as a senior matriculation class, preparatory in nature. In 1931 it became a Junior College, offering two full years of college work, general in nature, including vocational courses, and designed particularly for those not planning to go on to senior college. (The senior matriculation programme was retained, and still is, for those who need it, but its continuance is a source of unending difficulty for our organization of courses). In 1934 this two-year Junior College became a four-year general college of Arts, Science and Commerce.

At the time this expansion took place there was made and accepted a very definite and clear-cut distinction between the functions of a university and those of a college. A university, it was agreed, besides training for some of the higher professions, was concerned primarily with the task of producing a small elite of scholars and research workers, discovering new knowledge, and conducting scientific inquiry. A college, on the other hand, was concerned with growth in people at the post-high school level, and should provide for a much larger number of people than those who would eventually become the select group of the graduate schools. It should concentrate upon "teaching people to live significantly", rather than upon scholarship per se. Colleges might be, and frequently were, parts of a university organization, but even in such cases it was necessary to distinguish between the peculiar functions of each.

When the present Faculty of Arts, Science and Commerce was brought into being, it was for purposes of general education of a type closely related to life and to the needs of people. The principle of compulsory generalization for all students has been maintained from the beginning. As the College (Faculty of Arts, Science and Commerce) has grown, however, it has become apparent that "close relation to life" and "the needs of people" requires a vocational reference at the College level just as it did at the high school level. Our traditional policy would oblige us to recognize the validity of this claim, perhaps to a greater degree than has yet been done in our College programme.

In the College this vocational reference takes two forms:

1. the desirability of providing skills which will enable students to earn their living upon graduation.

2. the desirability of enabling a certain small proportion of superior graduates to proceed if they wish to higher studies without undue loss of time. (About one-third of the College's graduates to date have gone on to higher studies).

The problem presented in meeting these two recognized needs is that of providing for a certain amount of specialization (concentration or majoring) in a College which guards carefully its function of "general" education. It seems apparent, however, that "majoring" to an extent satisfactory to both groups 1 and 2 above could be arranged within our present framework of compulsory generalization. This, in fact, has been done unofficially by many students for several years, and has recently been arranged officially for Service students.

If we accept our traditional functions both of vocational and general education, it would seem that the following steps are necessary:

(1) An examination of our curricular organization, course sequences and course content, to see that they make it possible for a graduate to have the skills, knowledge and attitudes which will make him vocationally competent at a certain level -- and a definition of that level. For example - in Science, this might involve a closer relation of the Chemistry courses to chemical industry, and the encouragement of more concentration (majoring or specialization) in Chemistry than has hitherto been the case, formally. Similarly for other possible fields of vocational aim - e.g. - Physics and mathematics, Biology, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, although it might not include the whole list of academic departments, in view of the particular nature of our student body.

(2) Similarly, an examination of our curricular organization, course sequences and course content, to see that they make it possible for a student of high academic calibre to acquire a sufficient amount of concentration (majoring or specialization) in a given subject to enable him to proceed to graduate study without undue loss of time and with adequate background. The list of subjects in which this might be made possible, or encouraged, would doubtless also be limited by the nature of our student body, as mentioned in No. 1 above. It is suggested that the same programme would solve the problems of No. 1 and 2, if properly arranged. (These two suggestions would doubtless involve problems of staff and equipment).

(3) The maintenance of our principle of compulsory generalization, and emphasis upon the values of general education -- while still permitting or encouraging to "majoring" suggested in No. 1 and 2 for certain students. It is maintained that these three are not incompatible, but that their compatibility must be planned.
First - this majoring is possible within present rules of generalization
Second- the full implications of general education are not met by a mere accumulation of 21 courses about a compulsory core. Generalization does not take place by accumulation but by integration. The contents of each course should be examined from this point of view as well as from that of No. 1 and 2 above, to see that each develops within itself to the full of its own possible contributions to general education - its relationship to other subjects, its place in the fabric of civilization, its role in the life of man, apart from its own intrinsic contribution to intellectual growth. The writer feels that we have concentrated

on the last of these and neglected the others. He can see no reason why in the study of Physics, for instance, the historical development of this science and its relation to man's living and to the growth of his ideas through the ages, cannot be developed sufficiently to merge this subject irrevocably for the student in the main stream of human culture. Far from representing time lost from the study of Physics, such a praxis would enliven the subject and improve learning of the more prosaic details because it would give them human as well as scientific significance. Conversely, the writer can see no reason how the study of literature, for example, can be adequately carried on without constant reference to the contemporary state of scientific knowledge and the social conditions of the time. Such a process of cross-reference, as it were, in every course in the College would produce a type of integration, of generalization, which has never yet been really tried systematically in any educational institution, but which would be real general education. This would, moreover, offset such dangers as may lurk in the encouragement of "majoring" which we have until recently avoided. I might go further and suggest that in the possibility of such integration lies the real hope for higher education in the future. In these days of lengthening professional training, narrower and narrower specialization, we can no longer depend upon a preliminary Arts course alone to provide the general cultural and spiritual values expected of higher education. We can no longer get results from an academic division of labour into "cultural" and "practical" subjects. A real integration of the sort described above seems to be the only sensible solution.

4. Expansion of our resources for counselling and guidance. - Our policy in this regard has undergone a change since 1926, when the first full-time student counsellor in this area, perhaps in Canada, was appointed to the College staff. With the growth of the College this Counsellor became Headmaster of the High School and eventually Dean of the College, while still continuing his counselling function in these capacities. At the same time a conscious effort was made to decentralize the counselling services, to include the efforts of not only the principal, registrar and other administrative staff but the instructors as well. In the case of full-time staff there has been some success in this decentralization, limited obviously by the lack of specialized training for guidance on the part of the instructors. There has been practically no success in the case of part-time instructors apart from the kindly consultation typical of all sympathetic teachers. We are not prepared to abandon this policy of decentralized counselling service, but we are convinced that our College has grown to the point where such decentralized service cannot function properly without the direction of a full-time guidance officer. This is particularly true if we are to maintain our adherence to all three educational approaches outlined in Nos. 1, 2 and 3 above.

5. A re-examination of our exemplification of the "Junior College" function in the first two years of our College - prompted largely by a concern for what happens to people who start but do not complete a degree programme of studies. This Junior College programme, which was the entire college programme from 1931 to 1934, is still in existence as a sequence of studies. Indeed it has been enlarged considerably by the addition of a number of "terminal" vocational courses within the past four years. The Associate Diploma is still given to mark graduation from this two-year programme.

But the idea of a Junior College is not emphasized, The two-year rounded selection of courses is not stressed, and to most students and instructors the Associate Diploma merely marks the half-way point to the Bachelor's Degree. In spite of the fact that scores of students who embark upon the degree programme never finish, the number of those receiving Associate Diplomas each year is smaller than those receiving Degrees. One might expect it to be almost twice as large. If we accept the proviso that the "products" of an educational institution are the total body of its ex-students, rather than merely its graduates, we should be concerned about the people who do not finish the degree programme. One might suspect that a re-emphasis of the Junior College idea (perhaps even the name) might be of some value in this connection. In the meantime, the Junior College idea and function is very definitely part of our institutional framework and should not be neglected.

Time does not permit a discussion of the other three units of the present College and Schools -- the Art School, the Business School and the Elementary School -- in relation to our conception of the function of the total institution. Their task in each case is more clear-cut than those of the High School and the College. The Business School is frankly vocational, drawing its standards from the requirements of business; the Elementary School concentrates upon providing adults with the tool subjects of learning, the three - R's.; and the Art School serves two groups, those seeking professional training and those seeking self-expression through a cultural leisure time interest.

As we think of the possibility of a new building to house the College and Schools, we realize we must develop to the full the implications of some of the functions discussed in this paper. The size and shape and equipment of a building must be based upon the uses to which it is to be put. At such a time of expansion in resources it is natural to take more seriously the fifth functional strand suggested on page 1 above, the urge to seek out in our community the unmet educational needs, to contribute to the provision for all people of education to the limit of their capacity. The historic policy of our institution would not permit us to say that any real educational need of people, vocational or otherwise, lay outside our range of function so long as it did not contravene the essential purposes of the Young Men's Christian Association. Our only criteria, traditionally, would be the reality and extent of the need, the possibility through it of making a real contribution to the growth of persons, and the likelihood of other resources in the community proving sufficient to meet it. These factors alone would determine priorities should choice be necessary because capacity to serve was limited.

- K. E. NORRIS
Feb. 7, 1945.

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Summary of Educational Services to Armed Forces - 1939 - 1944.

Since the outbreak of the war in the fall of 1939, Sir George Williams College has provided free tuition in its regular classes to all members of the Armed Forces who desired to attend. During 1939-40, and 1940-41, this service was a part of the educational work of the Y.M.C.A. with the troops, which, during those years, emphasized the organization of special classes for men in uniform - in their barracks, at the Y.M.C.A. Red Triangle Club, and in Sir George Williams College. Latterly, this educational programme has been concentrated in the college. Total attendance in these various classes from November 1939 to December 1944 is 80,007 student hours.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, the Military Services Committee of the Montreal Y.M.C.A. commenced a study of the ways in which the Y.M.C.A. might serve the needs of members of His Majesty's Forces. In October 1939, Brigadier W. W. Foster, D.S.O., Director of Auxiliary Services announced that the Y.M.C.A. will be recognized officially by the Government as one of the National Civilian Agencies for auxiliary services, retaining autonomy within its own organization. He proceeded to outline some of the general activities in which the Department of National Defence would look to the Y.M.C.A. in Canada to provide, - among these were educational activities both cultural and religious. It was with these that the college, as a branch of the Montreal Y.M.C.A., became immediately concerned.

Four immediate objectives were taken for guidance in planning the disposal of facilities for the armed forces: (a) the constructive and interesting use of spare time by enlisted men, (b) the building and maintaining of morale, (c) the increase of efficiency for military responsibilities, (d) the preparation for successful post-war re-establishment of members of the forces.

It was suggested that classes might be held in barracks, at the 'Y' centre on Phillips Square, and possibly also in the local 'Y' Branches and Sir George Williams College. In the critical first few months of the war it was felt that decentralizing the classes would probably prove most effective, that the program should be built slowly one unit at a time, and that courses should be short so that their completion might be possible during the time the troops might be expected to remain in barracks in Montreal.

This first organizational procedure enabled the College and the Military Services Committee to meet not only the needs of individual members of the Armed Forces, but also to assist certain units in providing essential basic training in such subjects as practical mathematics, stenography, gas engines etc., at this crucial time. This aspect of the College's educational program was gradually discontinued as army educational progress and Canadian Legion Educational Services became developed to the

point where our services in this field were no longer necessary.

In order to reach the maximum number of men in the shortest time, and in order to meet most practically the most pressing legitimate needs of these men, the committee circularized a statement of its offer to provide such courses as were needed, among the officers in command of units posted in the Montreal area.

In the next three years the college provided instruction in the following subjects outside its regularly scheduled courses:-

Typewriting (Signallers and clerks)
Practical Mathematics (artillerymen)
French Conversation
Arithmetic (R.C.A.S.C.)
Mechanics Instructions) (R.C.A.S.C., drivers)
Mechanics Training Maintenance
German Conversation
Shorthand
Bookkeeping

Classes were held not only in the college plant but outside:
Rose de Lima Barracks
J. Napierre Reg'd Garage
Place Viger Barracks
Red Triangle Club
St. Helen's Island Barracks

Students in these classes represented every branch of His Majesty's Canadian Forces, many, particularly in the first year were, as suggested above, organized to meet the needs of particular units.

During these years 605 special classes were organized and instructed through the college. Instruction in these classes amounted to 810 class hours. Attendance in special classes, and for students enrolled in regular classes from November 1939 - April 1942, when the college ceased giving special classes but continued registering members of His Majesty's Armed Forces in regular classes of the college and schools without tuition, amounted to 20,686 student hours. Total cumulative attendance of armed forces in classes from November 1939 to November 1944 was 80,007 student hours.

Registration of members of His Majesty's Armed Forces in regular classes of College and Schools is shown in the table below.

SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

ACTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

in Regular Classes without Tuition Fee

	Feb 6 1945	Summer 1944	1943-1944	Summer 1943	1942-1943	Summer 1942	1941-1942	1940-1941
College								
Day	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
Evening	207	29	121	15	84	-	-	-
Eve. High School	40	12	25	13	15	-	-	-
Elementary School	4	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Business School								
Day	1	-	12	-	-	-	-	-
Evening	107	46	162	49	161	-	-	-
Art School								
Day	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Evening	29	-	12	-	11	-	-	-
Total Registration	381	87	336	77	275	39	105	15

One student took the facilities of the Active Service Registration Plan and graduated with a Bachelor's degree.
Several students, regularly attending the College were able to complete the requirements for their degree, under the above provisions, in their final year.

It has become the conviction of this college that owing to the fact that it offers a wide range of evening courses and curricula at various levels it can best meet the actual needs of these men and women, as individuals whose integrated needs extend beyond the immediate war years, by opening fully to them the regular courses offered by the College and Schools, according to the nature of these individual needs, rather than in opening specialized, short term war courses which consider them only as a group of persons with common short term needs. According to this policy this College still continues to extend to these men and women the free use of its facilities wherever these facilities best meet the needs of members of the forces as men and women.